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Bush hands President-elect troubled times

Iraq asks Clinton to cease attacks

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Fresh air battles erupted over northern Iraq on Tuesday and additional U.S. warships sailed to the region as the Bush administration prepared to hand its troubled relationship with Iraq to Presidentelect Clinton

President Bush's spokesman said the White House wanted to see action backing up the Iraqi offer to cease firing at allied planes in its "no-fly zones." The incoming Clinton admin-

istration, too, said it wanted more than words.
Iraq's ruling Revolutionary Command
Council — headed by Saddam Hussein —
said there would be no attacks on U.S., French or British planes in a gesture of good will starting at midnight on Clinton's Inaugura-

The move came after Iraq asked Clinton to abandon the allied air raid campaign, asserting that continued attacks would not force cooperation by Baghdad.

"There is a cease-fire regimen in place in U.N. Resolution 687, and if Iraq complies with that, then there should be no problem," said presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater.

George Stephanopoulos, Clinton communications director, said Iraq's offer did nothing

to change the fact that the new administration expects "full compliance with all the requiremiles east of the city of Mosul, Williams said." ments of the U.N. resolutions.

'We need to see Iraq change its behavior," Stephanopoulos said.

At the Pentagon, spokesman Pete Williams termed the offer "a helpful sign." But "more important than any statement is action," he said, citing the two issues that have drawn Iraq and the allies into military confrontation repeatedly in recent weeks.

He said Iraq must: - Stop firing on U.S., British and French aircraft patrolling the no-fly zones in the north and south, take its anti-aircraft missiles out of firing status and store them.

Agree to the weapons inspections demanded by the United Nations.

Both Williams and Fitzwater denied the Bush administration would steer clear of force against the Iraqi military if provoked in the fi-nal hours before Clinton is sworn in at noon EST on Wednesday.

"We continue to watch Iraq's behavior. We certainly would not hesitate to respond if necessary," said Fitzwater.

About 2:30 a.m. EST Tuesday, Iraqi missile and radar installations "locked on" a U.S. F-4G "Wild Weasel," which fired a anti-radar

'We're not certain of the results," he said. About an hour later, a U.S. Air Force F-16 drew Iraqi anti-aircraft artillery fire, but did not return the fire, Williams said.

In a third incident at 5:30 a.m. EST at a different location, two F-16s were fired on by Iraqi anti-aircraft artillery. They dropped four cluster bombs at the Iraqi weaponry, but Pentagon officials "don't know the results," Williams said.

He also denied any cracks had developed among the allies, saying "they remain united" on the two critical points: Saddam must comply with U.N. resolutions and Iraq must not interfere with allied flights in the no-fly zones.

Williams said that Iraqi jets are continuing to fly just across the 36th parallel that forms the southern border of the northern no-fly zone in an attempt to lure allied aircraft into air defense traps

"This is sticking a toe over the line," he said, indicating that the Iraqi flights are designed only to draw allied planes close enough to surface-to-air missile batteries to try to shoot them down.

At the White House, Fitzwater called Tuesday's skirmishes over northern Iraq "a defen-

Israeli lawmakers abolish legislation

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM - Lawmakers on Tuesday abolished a 7-year-old law barring Israelis from meeting with PLO members, raising hopes that Arabs may agree to resume Middle East peace talks.

The vote was 39-20 in the 120member parliament. The reason for the low turnout was not imme-

The decision could give a boost to Israel's negotiations with Pales-tinians and Arab neighbors. The

Palestinians have vowed to boy-

cott the talks until Israel allows

the repatriation of more than 400

alleged Muslim extremists ex-

tine Liberation Organization a terrorist group and barred any con-

Israel had considered the Pales-

Some officials have urged drop-

Israel."

diately clear.

pelled last month.

clude Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. statement from PLO spokesman Bassam Abu-Sharif in Tunisia said "the move will pave the way to set up an independent Palestinian state living side by side will Israel."

He also appealed for a summit between PLO chief Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin,

who opposed lifting the ban. A recent survey showed nearly

half of Israeli "The move will pave the way to set legislators favor direct negotiaup an independent Palestinian tions with the state living side by side will PLO, including the lawmakers from Rabin's Labor Party.

two-thirds of PLO spokesman Rabin staunchly op-

posed the idea, arguing that such contacts would force Israel to deal immediately with Palestinian demands for establishing an independent state in the Action the occupied West Bank and Gaza thuckle

Strip.
Government officials have acrectly negotiating with the PLO.

Tuesday's vote annulled a 1986 team ha amendment to Israel's anti-terror law which barred Israelis from meeting with members of terror organizations.

Violators faced up to three years in prison and several Israelis have served time for the offense. Among them was peace activist

Abie Nathan. Several Israeli legislators also have met with Arafat and other PLO officials, but were protected from prosecution by their parliamentary immunity.

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Vote pleases PLO delegation

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Liberal legislator Dedi Zucker said he expected Tuesday's vote would help "create a better atmos-phere for the peace talks. This will also counter the demonization of the PLO practiced here for so many years.

Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, said Israel's action will "go a long way toward creat-

ing a better understanding of the PLO . . . and improving chances for peace."

The Palestinians remain deterto south Lebanon, Ashrawi said. Israeli peace activist Abie Nathan, said he would fly to Tunis on Wednesday to meet with Arafat to ask him for a conciliatory gesture toward Israel.

ping the ban to counter the rising influence of Muslim fundamentalmined to boycott peace talks until Israel repatriatiates more than 400 Israeli liberals also have said Palestinians it expelled last month that open direct negotiations with the PLO could strengthen Pales-

tinian moderates who support Middle East peace talks.
The PLO holds considerable influence over the Palestinian delegation to the talks, which also in-

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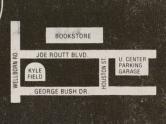
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